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## Office of Current Production and Analytic Support

**CIA Operations Center** 

ER 3877X-87



News Bulletin The Washington Post, Page D15

Monday, 30 November 1987 Item No. 1

## **JACK ANDERSON and DALE VAN ATTA**

## **CIA Faces the AIDS Epidemic**

he Central Intelligence Agency has finally decided that it has to deal with the reality of the worldwide epidemic of acquired immune deficiency syndrome. The agency has sent out urgent warnings to all its agents and has begun routine testing of applicants, employes and their families to identify carriers of the deadly virus.

Earlier this year, the CIA issued a special alert to its spies in 15 countries, warning them to be more careful about their sexual contacts—whether recreational or on the job—with individuals who might have the disease. The countries of highest risk were identified as Haiti, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, West Germany, the Central African Republic, Congo, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We've obtained an internal report by the CIA's Office of Medical Services, which reveals that the agency "began routinely testing" employes and job applicants last February. It has been using two laboratory procedures, both of which check for the presence of antibodies to the AIDS virus, which is easier than detecting the virus.

The first procedure is a blood test called ELISA, for enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay. If the test result and a retest are positive, the Western Blot procedure is then used. "Should the Western Blot read positive, a second blood sample is drawn and the entire three-step procedure is repeated," the internal CIA report states.

"Like any laboratory test, there are false positive and false negative results," the report adds. "By doing two different procedures and repeating them with a new sample, the chances of a 'false' report are minimized. Nevertheless, the implications of a 'positive' test are potentially devastating, and for this reason every effort is made to insure the utmost accuracy of the report and protection of the patient's confidentiality."

The spy agency's medical officers are testing three specific groups, according to the internal report:

"1. Applicants for employment.

"2. Employes and dependents over age 18 who have physical examinations for official purposes [such as posting abroad].

"3. Those recommended by a staff physician—[such as] persons who received transfusions of blood products in the period 1978 to the spring of 1985, hemophiliacs and selected other individuals."

The CIA has established a "protocol," or set of administrative courtesies that are extended to individuals "who have a confirmed positive test" to the AIDS virus, now known as HIV, for human immunodeficiency virus.

"Any such individual will be be informed directly by an agency physician, and the information will remain medically confidential," the report states, adding:

"Applicants testing positive will be counseled but disqualified from agency employment. If an agency employe or dependent is HIV-positive, comprehensive counseling and further medical evaluation will be made available. Depending upon the state of HIV infection, overseas assignability would be limited as appropriate."

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